

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
TC/A.U. 1771

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 33, with the following amended paragraph:

-- It should be understood that numerous means can be engaged for modifying the surface charge of components within a composite without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, such means could include, but are not limited to, chemicals (e.g., oxidation, reduction, hydrolysis, polymerization, and addition reactions); coatings; ~~[[and]]~~ electron beam~~[[,]]~~ and radiation, and corona treatments; or combinations thereof. For the present invention, the surface charge / ionic interactions between composite components provide a condition that delivers the effect of increasing the fluid intake rate of a composite as measured using the test methods described herein. When modifying the surface charge, the means selected should both form the desired combination of cationic or anionic surface charges when composite components are exposed to an aqueous medium, and should retain the resulting cationic or anionic charge on the surface of the component. In one example, each of the components is subjected to a surface charge treatment to improve the overall composite fluid intake rate.--